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MATTHEW ARNOLD'S *The Church of Brou*

It seems not to have been noticed that the third section of Matthew Arnold's *The Church of Brou* reposes upon a page of Edgar Quinet's essay, *Les Arts de la Renaissance, et de l'Église de Brou*, written in 1834. Some of the best lines of Arnold's poem evidently derive from the following sentences:

"C'est de cette heure seulement que commence pour elle le vrai mariage dans son duché éternel, alors que les fanfares ne sonnent plus pour la chasse, que son époux sur son cheval fougueux ne poursuit plus jamais le sanglier dans la forêt, et qu'elle ne l'attend plus en vain jusqu'à la nuit, en sanglotant à la fenêtre de sa tour. . . . Les voilà qui dorment leur sommeil de marbre. Qui pourrait raconter leurs songes plus blancs que l'albâtre des tombeaux! Quand leurs froides paupières se soulèvent, ils voient les arceaux sur leurs têtes, la lumière transfigurée des vitraux, la Vierge et les saints immobiles à leurs places; et ils pensent en eux-mêmes: C'est ici l'éternité. . . . Quand le vent fait gémir les portes, ils murmurent entre eux: Qu'avez-vous, mon âme, pour soupirer si haut? et quand la pluie creuse le toit sur leurs têtes, ils se disent: Entendez-vous aussi sur votre dais la pluie de l'éternel amour?"

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 BRIEF MENTION

The Technic of Versification: Notes and Illustrations, by William Odling (Oxford, Parker & Co., 1916). A Professor of Natural Science, appealing to the example set by his "late eminent colleague and long-while personal friend, Professor J. J. Sylvester," has ventured, by way of recreation for old age, to put pen to paper on a subject that has from an early day been a matter of interest to him. Believing that readers of poetry are not well supplied with encouraging means to become familiar with the art of versification, he hopes to persuade them of the truth of Poe's statement that "in fact the subject is exceedingly simple." If the subject be simple, "exceedingly simple," it must be possible for one not technically equipped for the task to supply "a sufficiently full and particularized setting forth of the Technic of Versification, to afford him [the general reader] some measure of information and of satisfaction with regard to it." This mode of reasoning would be promptly rejected, if applied to any other of the fine arts. Is it valid for versification, with technicalities that are intimately bound up with the essential principles of the supreme art of poetry?

The art of poetry is closely allied to the art of vernacular speech, and it follows that a refined sense for the latter should lead to a

quick perception of the former; and both the practiced art and the unpracticed but appreciated art should prepare the mind for instruction in the principles governing each. The ordinary experience of acquiring one's vernacular, aided by the grammar of the school-room, does not, however, fit one for a technical explanation of approved usage. Even a skilful French writer, for example, would be unfitted, except by special historic and analytic study, to explain his vernacular use of the article. That is a profound chapter in the philosophic grammar of his language, but he may not trouble himself about it. Nor does the mere appreciation of the effects of rhythmically measured language, assisted by the traditional school-room knowledge of the elements of versification, equip one for an authoritative handling of the subject. So too, to complete the obvious parallelism, the poets conform to and establish conventionalities in the artistic use of language in accordance with a refined perception of the rhythmic permissibilities of their vernacular, and not in obedience to a technical or thoroly scientific familiarity with the more recondite facts concerning their language. It is the character of too many treatises on versification that justifies insistent repetition of the plain truth that the art of versification is based on the laws and conventionalities of the language employed, which, to be accurately understood, must be inquired into by the processes of accurate study.

Mr. Odling's sub-title, "Notes and Illustrations," describes the plan of the book. The first part consists of "Notes," in which the usual description of the externalities of the art is traversed, but not without some less usual observations of importance. His style of writing is, however, unattractive, even reprehensible. To read a treatise composed after the manner of a synoptical enumeration, in which the construction of the independent nominative is used exclusively, is a task that presupposes a degree of sustained interest in excess of what may be normally demanded of the elementary student or of the general reader. A paragraph may be cited. It will be observed, in slight extenuation of the judgment just expressed, that Mr. Odling has no little skill in his method. Under the heading of "Essentials of Verse" he writes: "Recognizability for the most part of even a single isolated line as being not a short line of prose, but a line of verse—that is to say, as being itself a verse. Such recognizability dependent *mainly* on modes of expression—however indefinable—specially characteristic of verse. But further than this, even quite commonplace lines of verse distinguishable from lines of prose by the two conditions of strictly curtailed length and regular sequence of stress" (p. 21).

In the second and larger part of the book (pp. 31-90), Mr. Odling displays his "Illustrations" of the various forms and combinations of lines. The cited passages are marked off into component 'feet' by spaces and bars that give the matter a resemblance to an accountant's columns of figures. The unattractive page is, how-

ever, a picture of the essential features of Mr. Odling's main contention. He is most specifically concerned with the pauses by which he would mark off the 'feet' of a line, with the pauses that must show the determinative length of a line, and secondarily with the pauses denoted by punctuation. But his columns of 'feet' are sometimes wrongly composed. For example, the rhythm of the alternate lines of Shelley's *When the lamp is shattered* is thus misrepresented: "The light in | the dúst | lies déad;" "The rainbow's | glory | is shed;" "Sweet tones are | remem- | ber'd not;" "Lov'd accents | are soon | forgot" (p. 63). Mr. Odling has recalled from merited banishment the amphibrach. His ample illustrations of the assumed use of this impossible rhythmic unit are, of course, all incorrectly scanned.

Mr. Odling, with but minor vacillation, adheres to 'routine scansion,' or, as it may be expressed, scansion according to the rhythmic signature. This is his chief merit. That this is the true method of scansion should, however, be shown by a discussion of the character of the rhythmic elements of the language,—a technical matter, which would be more than appropriate in a work entitled *The Technic of Versification*.

J. W. B.

Casos Cervantinos que tocan a Valladolid, por Narciso Alonso Cortés. Madrid, 1916 (Junta para ampliación de Estudios e investigaciones científicas Centro de Estudios históricos). In this work Sr. Cortés, whose investigations in the archives of Valladolid have brought to light so much important information concerning the lives of Spanish men of letters, has made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the family of Cervantes. It is especially interesting for the new data it furnishes in regard to the licentiate Juan de Cervantes, the grandfather of the author of *Don Quixote*. Sr. Cortés thinks that, until the contrary be demonstrated, "en Talavera estaba el solar de Miguel de Cervantes," and that the branch from which he descended had settled in Seville before 1488. The author also thinks it quite probable that Cervantes may have taken the name Saavedra from the Saavedras of Seville. From Seville the ancestors of Cervantes went to Córdoba, where we find his great-grandfather "el bachiller Rodrigo de Cervantes" in 1488. Here Rodrigo married Doña Catalina de Cabrera, and here probably the licentiate Juan de Cervantes married Leonor de Torreblanca. This marriage took place in 1505 or earlier. About this time the family must have moved to Alcalá de Henares, of which Juan de Cervantes was *corregidor* in 1509. In 1528 we find him, as "oidor del Consejo del duque del Infantado," living in Guadalajara with his four children: Juan, Rodrigo (father of Miguel), doña Maria and Andrés.

The story of these days, the relations of doña Maria with the archdeacon of Guadalajara and Talavera, D. Martin de Mendoza, and the *pleito delicado* which followed, are not very edifying read-

ing. Speaking of Da. Magdalena de Cervantes, sister of the author of *Don Quixote*, Sr. Cortés observes: "Como casi todas las mujeres de esta misteriosa familia,—no hay por qué ocultarlo,—ofrece en su vida episodios sobradamente sospechosos." The book contains much other matter of importance concerning personages more or less closely connected with Cervantes and his works, and worthily supplements the publications of Pérez Pastor and Rodríguez Marín.

H. A. R.

Morte Arthure, mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen und Glossar, hrsg. von Erik Björkman (Alt- und Mittelenglische Texte, hrsg. von L. Morsbach und F. Holthausen. Heidelberg, Carl Winter, 1915). The Middle English alliterative *Morte Arthure*, which is preserved in the unique Thornton ms. of the Lincoln Cathedral Library, has been edited several times before but never so well as in this edition by Professor Björkman. Here is supplied a complete critical apparatus—introduction, notes, and glossary—to say nothing of an abstract of the story of the poem. As is well known, the vocabulary of the *Morte Arthure* presents many problems of difficulty, and it is perhaps from this point of view that the present edition marks the greatest advance upon its predecessors. The labor which Professor Björkman has expended on this side of his work is apparent not only in his excellent glossary, but in the numerous discussions of rare and difficult words in his notes. The annotations, however, on textual and other questions are also much more numerous than in the previous editions, and they exhibit the qualities of succinctness and accuracy, which distinguish all the editor's work.

As regards the subjects dealt with in the introduction, it should be observed that Professor Björkman rejects the ascription of the *Morte Arthure* to Huchown. He accepts apparently the English origin of the poem. Doubtless owing to the plan of the series in which this edition is published, he gives us no discussion of the interesting problem of the source of the romance. He expresses his approval, however, of Imelmann's conclusions on this head, which nowadays no one will be inclined to dispute, namely, that the source in question is ultimately a French expanded version of Wace's *Brut*. Perhaps the poet's immediate original was a modification of this expanded version.

J. D. B.

Snorri Sturluson's triad of poetic apprenticeship has never been completely done into English. Bishop Percy, G. W. Dasent, of *Njáls Saga* fame, R. B. Anderson, I. A. Blackwell, and S. Laing rendered only parts of it, preferably the *Gylfaginning*. The latest translation, A. G. Brodeur's *Prose Edda* (Publ. of the American-Scandinavian Foundation, New York, 1916, xxii + 266 pp.), is also still incomplete. The *Gylfaginning*, that treasure-house of

Odinic cosmogony (a Danish translation of which, by Finnur Jónsson, 1902, seems to have escaped Dr. Brodeur's attention), and the *Skáldskaparmál*, the book of scaldic lore, are printed in a combination of careful work and attractive type, but the *Háttatál*, Snorri's *Clavis Metrica*, has again received a step-motherly treatment. It would have been especially praiseworthy to present its paraphrase of *Kenningar*, because the technical nature of the latter militates against their accessibility.

Critical probes and comparison with the Old Norse text prove the translation to be far superior to Anderson's, which has thus far been the best version. Translating the Eddic literature cannot be considered a matter of routine readiness. Wilhelm von Humboldt held that there was no golden medium between violating an original and outraging the vernacular. But then a perfect translation would be the original itself, and we can demand no more than that the translator conform to a reasonable extent to the genius of both languages. Dr. Brodeur's version, clear-cut and terse, happily avoids the enticing possibility of the paraphrase and sentence-completion so characteristic of the earlier translators. With a material which cannot, by its very nature, avoid the 'fatal impression' of translation, he has done well. A deeper study of the reciprocal relations of rhythm and exactness of meaning in the poetical insertions would, however, have improved his work.

The mechanical appearance of the book is a pleasure to the eye. The Foundation should by all means encourage the translation, preferably a collaboration of several scholars, of the *Elder Edda* as well. Vigfússon and Powell's version is in prose; Thorpe's is not composed in alliterative verse; and Miss Bray's is both incomplete and ambiguous for the sake of literary effect.

A. G.

Walter C. Bronson's *American Prose* (University of Chicago Press, 1916) is a companion volume to his *American Poems*. The two books constitute the most comprehensive and serviceable anthology available for college courses in American literature. Nearly one-third of the closely printed text of the *Prose* is given to the colonial and revolutionary periods. Such emphasis upon the early writers, most of whom have little significance for literature, is justified by their historical importance and by the fact that the originals are mostly inaccessible to students. Works in the nineteenth century are restricted to the period ending with the close of the Civil War. They include, in speeches by Calhoun, Webster, and Lincoln, a representation of American oratory in the fifties. A valuable feature of the notes is the inclusion of generous excerpts from contemporary criticism of the works selected. It is unfortunate that a desire to give complete works should have led to the omission of so important a writer as Charles Brockden Brown.

J. C. F.